



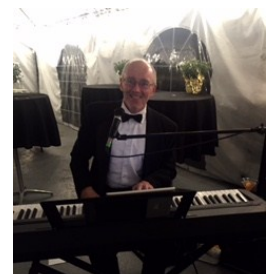
The Lab Notebook

Muckers' Ball Raises Funds for Restoration of Time Clock



Superintendent Tom Ross gives guests some background on the Building 5 time clock.

On Saturday evening, October 1, nearly 150 guests flocked to the Laboratory courtyard to celebrate the third annual MUCKERS' BALL. Sponsored by the Friends of Thomas Edison NHP, the event raised around \$5,000 to conserve the time clock in the lobby entrance of Building 5. The museum remained open for visitors to tour before they headed out to the tent for music and dancing as well as a buffet and open bar. The guests, many sporting period costumes, so enjoyed the festivities that leaving by closing time at 9:00 pm proved difficult.



Thomas Edison NHP Dedicates a "Pocket Park"



man, Friends of Thomas Edison National Historical Park, Michelle Casalino, Town Council, Ken Broderick, Executive VP UNICO, and Frank De Maio, UNICO.

Through a generous donation from UNICO, America's largest Italian American service and charitable organization, Thomas Edison NHP has completed a "pocket park" on Main Street in front of the visitor parking lot. The park was dedicated on November 3 with several guests in attendance. In the photo at left, the ribbon cutters were, left to right: Frank Gonnella, UNICO, Joe Vena, UNICO, Tom Ross, Superintendent, Thomas Edison NHP, West Orange Mayor Robert Parisi, Frank Paolercio, President, UNICO, John Di Napoli, UNICO, Arthur Gordon, Chair-



Message from the Superintendent

Happy Holidays and Thank You all for a great 2016 Centennial Celebration! Last edition we focused a great deal of our Notebook on the successful summer programming and strong visitation we experienced. This edition really speaks to and highlights the exciting and important partnerships and partnership projects we completed this last quarter of the year.

Riding the wave of the Centennial and the work of the Friends of Thomas Edison, we were very fortunate to have the local UNICO organization make a \$10,000 donation to create a new pocket park plaza on Main Street which not only helps our park and visitors, but strengthens our connection to Main Street and the positive work happening around us. Likewise, Monk's Home Improvement of Morristown decided to donate their services (a \$4,500 value) in custom building an AV cabinet as part of our park theater renovations which has brought our theater into the 21st century and greatly enhanced the visitor experience.

I would also like to extend a shout out to our dedicated and incredible volunteer corps at the park who give selflessly of their time, talents and treasure. 79 volunteers contributed more than 8,800 hours in FY16, that is a 2,000 increase over FY15! Amazing! Check out the individuals and the hours they gave this past year—incredible dedication—we truly cannot do it without you. Thank you!

As we leave our Centennial year, I say thank you to all who made it a memorable success. I wish you all a happy and healthy new year and now it's on to our second century of service! I will see you around the park in 2017!

Sincerely,
Tom Ross

The unit fits the historic character of the room in a minimum of floor space and accommodates the unique storage requirements of the AV equipment. Both the design and the construction were completed by the staff of Monk's Home Improvements of Morristown, NJ, who generously donated all of their services and materials for the cabinet project.

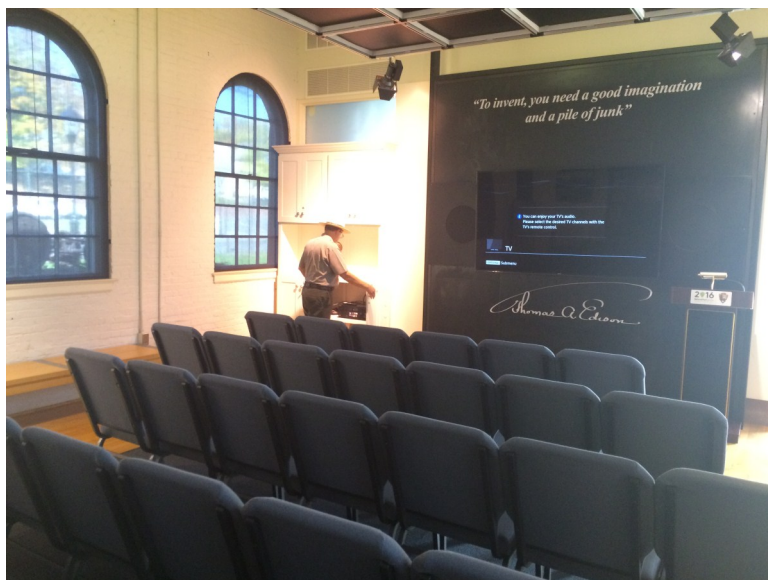
The theater renovation project was a key initiative of the Park in celebration of the National Park Service's Centennial. Improving both the visitor experience and upgrading technology strongly support the Centennial's mission to connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates.

"We are so pleased to bring this visitor experience upgrade to the Park through a public-private partnership with such a generous donation from Monk's Home Improvements," said Superintendent Tom Ross, "The interest and support we have received from visitors, partners, and the business community have been tremendous and have really made our Centennial year special."

Several films are shown throughout the day in the theater. In addition to the Edison classic *The Great Train Robbery*, *The Invention Factory*, *The Story of Thomas Edison and his West Orange Lab*, and *Glenmont: A Historical Tour*, *Thomas and Mina Edison's West Orange Home*, we are also showing our newest film: *The Wizard of West Orange* (2016). This film is a documentary short about the genius of Thomas Edison, his inventions, his life, and his workshops, produced and directed by Jane Steuerwald and Joel Katz, professors in the Media Arts Department of NJ City University, in Jersey City, NJ., students at the university filmed and worked on the film as a team project in celebration of the NPS Centennial.

The "ribbon-cutting" with Park staff and representatives of Monk's Home Improvements. The new AV cabinet is in the background.

Thomas Edison NHP Upgrades Visitor Center Theater



Thomas Edison NHP has renovated the video theater in the Visitor Center. A new, large-screen smart TV, comfortable seating, custom cabinetry for the AV equipment, a new wireless lectern, and public Wi-Fi enhance the visitor experience and allow for new and innovative programming expected by visitors in the 21st century. Previously, the theater featured fixed wooden benches which did not allow for efficient use of the space or visitor comfort and audiovisual equipment that was more than ten years old, providing a poor viewing experience and limited interchangeability with other media devices.

The new AV equipment boasts dramatically improved picture clarity and a screen surface that is 50% larger than the original. Smart technology will work with the free public Wi-Fi to provide flexibility in programming and educational use of the space. New individual seats provide both comfort and an ability to arrange the space for a variety of visitor programs and school visits.

In addition, a custom-built cabinet houses the theater's audiovisual equipment. The unit fits the historic character of the room in a minimum of floor space and accommodates the unique storage requirements of the AV equipment. Both the design and the construction were completed by the staff of Monk's Home Improvements of Morristown, NJ, who generously donated all of their services and materials for the cabinet project.



Christmas Memories from the Edison Children

Glenmont is dressed up for the holiday season and ready to welcome visitors. The Edison children shared their Christmas recollections in oral interviews preserved in the archives. Here are some excerpts.

Theodore recalled: “Our Christmas was always quite a time. We’re back on the living room floor, in the hall. We used to play this phonograph with the Christmas carols, and then my brother and sister and uncle and myself, we’d all sing the carols outside...[T]hen we would all go in and sing a carol outside the door to my mother and father’s room, then we’d all go in and sit on the bed. Well, I think Father got very little out of it because, of course, he couldn’t hear, and having these kids climbing all over the place and looking at these presents didn’t mean much to him. But it was wonderful for us.” Later in the day “they often had, oh, maybe twenty or thirty people would be in for Christmas dinner. They would all come out here and sit around the tree and they would distribute the presents.”



Madeleine remembered especially Christmas Day of 1901. “[E]verybody assembled soon after breakfast and the doors were opened and we saw the tree in all its glory. It was hung with chains of gold and silver balls and yards and yards of tinsel. There were colored electric lamps all through it. (They last much better than candles and make a pretty display.) We had Santa Claus coming in for baby [Theodore] (who was a little afraid of the dear old man until he saw some small cars and an engine which Santa Claus held in his hand). Baby cannot withstand the temptation of cars.”



Visit Glenmont, Friday—Sunday, through Sunday, Jan. 8.



Opera Students Recreate Edison Recordings



On October 18, we hosted the final event of the Opera Then and Now: Professional Development, Live Performances, and a Celebration of Thomas Edison’s Recorded Operas. This was part of a partnership between us and the CoOPER-Active Program of Westminster Choir College of Rider University to provide an opera outreach experience specifically designed to inspire young people to “find their park” during the NPS centennial.

About 120 middle school students toured the park, listened to a live opera performance, and watched a wax cylinder recording demonstration of the opera piece. The program was also live streamed and broadcast on facebook and periscope. Rider also developed a vast collection of educational resources, including 10 middle school lesson plans, to support this event and are available to the public. To access these materials please visit: www.rider.edu/opera thenandnow.

Here is the link to an article that Rider published about the project: <http://www.rider.edu/news/2016/06/03/national-parks-service-and-westminsters-cooperative-program-partner-showcase-historical-opera>.



Sound Recording curator Jerry Fabris prepares a wax cylinder to record one of the Ryder University vocalists.



Middle school students compare live performances with the wax recordings, a recreation of an Edison Tone Test.

Chemical Survey in Progress

The second of a three-phase Historical Chemical Survey is currently underway. Contractors from Renova Environmental Services are examining the many bottles and containers in the Chemistry Laboratory. They will move from there to other locations around the complex. Hazardous materials were identified and removed during the first phase of the project.



We extend special thanks to Steve Elkins of the Park Service’s Historic Architecture, Conservation, and Engineering Center (HACE) for his tireless efforts restoring the back Den patio of Glenmont this past summer. This project was supported by National Park Service funds and will continue into next year.



Making Edison Connections at the Petersen Automotive Museum



Glenmont Curator Beth Miller with the Detroit Electric Brougham at the Petersen Automotive Museum in L.A.

We found an Edison connection across the continent in Los Angeles. The Petersen Automotive Museum was founded in 1994 with the mission of “exploring and presenting the history of the automobile and its impact on American life.” Previously located within the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles, the staff sought a more distinctive space. The answer was an abandoned department store, largely windowless, a plus when housing

multi-million dollar museum collections that cannot be exposed to high levels of harmful UV light. After a 90 million dollar renovation, the museum reopened its doors to the public in 2015.

The sleek and bare museum backdrop serves as a contrast to the once state-of-the-art equipment exhibited in the electric charging station exhibition. This permanent gallery highlights electric cars, their related equipment, and their history in the United States. The star of the exhibit is Thomas Edison, whose 1915 nickel-iron EV battery was made right here in West Orange at the Edison complex. Descriptive labels reveal the target audience for electric charging stations: women motorists who could have them installed at their private residences.

The museum also proudly displays a 1915 Detroit Electric Brougham, similar to the one housed in the Glenmont garage, which was regularly used by Mina Edison. Made by the Anderson Electric Car Company from 1906 through 1939, the Brougham was manufactured longer than any other brand of electric car. Mina Edison may have liked it for its especially quiet engine or the easy-to-use control levers that could be folded conveniently out of the way when not in use. Or perhaps she liked the stunning powder grey-blue paint job which is accented by its brightly colored fenders. Thanks to the support of our partner, the Edison Innovation Foundation, Mina’s Detroit Electric Brougham is currently off-site for restoration. The Petersen Museum gives us a sneak peak at what we might expect to see upon its return. Edison connections, such as this one at the Petersen, can be found almost anywhere. We encourage you to visit more museums and see what connections you can discover.



Our Dedicated Volunteers

Our VIP volunteers, interns, and Student Conservation Association volunteers contributed 8,860 hours to the Park during the 2016 fiscal year that ended on September 30. Thanks to our new and seasoned volunteers this year who helped us increase and improve visitor services, education programs, archives and collections management, park administration, garden and greenhouse care, and general maintenance support. The centennial year was truly spectacular, and it could not have been done without their help. Cheers for the next 100 years!

Our high achievers this year were:

Les Williams 420
Arthur Gordon 378
Carlos Aguirre 362.5
Gaye Olin 315.6
John Erdreich 255
Tom Hilmer 248.5
Harvey Cohen 235.5
Bill Hagmann 209.5
Amy Trimarco 188.5
Faraja Thompson 182

Yvan Beausoleil 179.75
Kevin Dyer 150
Jackie Messineo 147.5
Dan Hockstern 142.3
Nancy Farley 134.7
Evelyn Gurland 130
Alice Creviston 102
Bob Donnelly 97
Elizabeth Miner 96
Elena Vitullo 88.15

FY 2015: Total Volunteer Hours: 6,816; Total Volunteers: 74
FY2016: Total Volunteer Hours: 8,860.4; Total Volunteers 79

Thanks again to everyone. Happy holidays, and we look forward to seeing you in the coming year.

Edison’s AC/DC Current War Sparks a Movie War



Benedict Cumberbatch

Two films about Thomas Edison’s rivalry with George Westinghouse over the merits of alternating and direct current will soon begin filming.

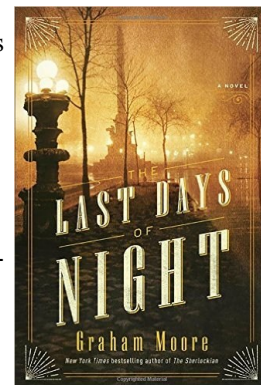
One is *The Current War* with Benedict Cumberbatch as Edison and Michael Shannon as Westinghouse, with Katherine Waterston as Westinghouse’s wife, Marguerite Erskine. Nicholas Hoult may appear as Nikola Tesla.



Eddie Redmayne

The other film is an adaptation of the recent novel *The Last Days of Night* by Graham Moore, who is also writing the script. Eddie Redmayne is playing the lead character, Paul Cravath, a fictional lawyer who represents Westinghouse after Edison sues him for patent infringement and seeks damages of one billion dollars.

Even eighty-five years after his death, Edison can still generate some heat at the movies. Good thing he invented them.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Thomas Edison National Historical Park
211 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052

Thomas Edison National Historical Park was established to preserve and protect Thomas Alva Edison's West Orange Laboratory, home, and collections for the education and inspiration of people worldwide.

Thomas Edison National Historical Park
211 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052
Web site: www.nps.gov/edis
Email: edis_superintendent@nps.gov

Visitor Information
973-736-0550 x11
Fax: 973-243-7172

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Volunteers-In-Parks Coordinator
Thomas Edison National Historical Park

Michelle Mihalkovitz
973-736-0550 x31 phone
michelle_ortwein@nps.gov

www.nps.gov/edis Click on
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The Lab Notebook is a quarterly publication of Thomas Edison National Historical Park.

Editor
Edward Wirth

Contributors

Hap Bojsza
Arthur Gordon
Theresa Jung
Holly Marino
Michelle Mihalkovitz
Beth Miller
John O'Reilly
Karen Sloat-Olsen

Comments? Write to:
Thomas Ross, Superintendent
Thomas Edison National Historical Park
211 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052



Edison's coffin in the Glenmont drawing room, 1931.

Funerary Objects Conserved and Exhibited at Glenmont

When Thomas Edison collapsed at the Light's Golden Jubilee Festival in October of 1929, it was clear that the health of America's greatest inventor was in decline. Suffering from diabetes and other complaints, he began to work more and more from his home, Glenmont, instead of

spending his typically long days working at the Laboratory complex. By the summer of 1931, his condition had worsened and he began to experience what were described as "sinking spells." Before Edison took his final breath on October 18th of 1931, his last audible words were "It is very beautiful over there."

Interpreting this period for the public is a challenge that enables the Park to explore such topics as how a nation mourned one of its icons, how Edison's family responded to the tragedy, and how the traditions and rituals of the era were reflected in funerary events. This topic also serves as a springboard to discuss how Edison's family cared for him in the months leading up to his passing. Objects recently discovered in the Glenmont attic help us convey that story to the public.

These objects, his wheel chair, his portable commode, and his invalid tray, help visitors imagine what the Edison Master Bedroom may have looked like just before Edison's death when he was lying in bed in the "sickroom" as his family members referred to it. Recently conserved by the Park Service's Historic Architecture, Conservation, and Engineering Center (HACE) team, these objects were exhibited at Glenmont this past October to commemorate the 85th anniversary of Thomas Edison's death. The funerary wreath sent to Mina Edison by Herbert Hoover, also conserved by HACE, was exhibited in the Drawing Room where Edison's funeral took place. Remarkably, Mina Edison kept this wreath as a memento, storing it in the house for the remaining years of her life. Exhibiting these lesser known artifacts gives us the opportunity to tell this story and highlight the emotional connections the objects had to Edison family members. Future issues of *The Lab Notebook* will feature more untold stories from Glenmont.



The memorial wreath sent by President Herbert Hoover to Mina Edison.